

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 04074 221739Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 221545Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2512

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KINGSTON 4074

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, JM

SUBJECT: MOOD AT PNP ANNUAL CONFERENCE

REF: KINGSTON 4062

1. REFTEL REPORTED PNP ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND PM MANLEY'S CLOSING ADDRESS AT PUBLIC RALLY.

2. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NORMALLY DISINCLINED TO REPORT IN DETAIL COMMENT OF POLITICAL COLUMNISTS ON EVENTS OF THIS KIND, WE ARE STRUCK BY THE IMPRESSIONS REPORTED IN DAILY GLEANER SEPT. 22 BY MALCOLM SHARP -- THE PEN NAME OF DAVID D'COSTA. IS ONE OF JAMAICA'S MOST ASTUTE AND ARTICULATE POLITICAL OBSERVERS. ALTHOUGH HIS SYMPATHIES TEND TO BE WITH THE OPPOSITION, HE HAS NEVER HESITATED TO ATTACK EITHER PNP OR THE JLP AND TENDS TO TAKE A RATHER BALANCED IF CYNICAL VIEW OF THE POLITICAL SCENE IN HIS PUBLISHED WRITINGS.

3. BEGIN TEXT..."MOOD ASIDE, THE SHEER NUMBERS PRESENT WERE MOST IMPRESSIVE. WHETHER THE POLICE ESTIMATE OF 35,000 WAS ON THE HIGH SIDE OR NOT, THERE

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PAGE 02 KINGST 04074 221739Z

WERE MORE PEOPLE ASSEMBLED THAN EVER BEFORE SEEN FOR

SUCH AN OCCASION. AND WHETHER THEY WERE TRUCKED IN, TRICKED IN, OR CAME ON THEIR OWN TWO LEGS THE FACT IS THAT THEY WERE THERE AND THEY LOVED IT.

..."TO BEGIN WITH, I CAN APPRECIATE THE TRIUMPH OF SUNDAY. TO FACE SUCH A CROWD IN THE MIDST OF OUR UNPRECEDENTED CATALOGUE OF NATIONAL DISASTERS WAS NO EASY TASK. TO CONJURE ENTHUSIASM IN THE SHADOW OF ALL THE FAILURES AND SHORTFALLS OF TODAY WOULD HAVE BEEN BEYOND ANYONE BUT MR. MICHAEL MANLEY. AND HE DID IT BRILLIANTLY.

"WITHIN THE COMPASS OF HIS SPEECH HE WAS ABLE TO TRANSFORM, ALMOST MAGICALLY, THE CRUSHING DISAPPOINTMENTS OF THE PRESENT INTO PROOFS OF SUCCESS -- OR AT LEAST NOBILITY. 'WHEN YOU SUFFER FOR A CAUSE IT IS NOT SUFFERING, IT IS STRUGGLING' AND HIS AUDIENCE AGREE WITH HIM FERVENTLY.

"BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE IN THE MOOD, SOMETHING I'VE SENSED BEFORE WITH MR. MANLEY'S PERFORMANCES, AND SOMETHING WHICH DISTURBS ME AS DEEPLY AS --ON OCCASION -- HIS WORDS CAN MOVE ME. IS THERE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE FACT THAT THE CAMERAS CAUGHT HIM IN MID-HATE SO OFTEN?

"HOW MUCH OF THE UNDENIABLE ELECTRICITY OF SUNDAY'S MEETING DERIVES FROM A CAREFULLY CALCULATED ATMOSPHERE OF AGGRESSION AND HATRED? TAKEN BY THEMSELVES, HIS WORDS FOLLOW THE ACCUSTOMED 'FIVE-EM'HELL' FORMULA ADOPTED BY THE EMBATTLED POLITICIAN EVERYWHERE. BUT ONE OF THE MELODIES THAT CANNOT BE MISSED BEHIND THOSE WORDS IS TOO FAMILIAR AND TOO DISTURBING TO FORGET. I WAS REMINDED, FLEETINGLY, OF OTHER STADIUMS. OF NUREMBURG AND HAVANA. JUST THE FAINTEST WHIFF, THE BAREST ECHO. BUT IT WAS THERE.

"THIS ASPECT OF MR. MANLEY'S POLITICAL STYLE IS NOT LOST ON HIS SUPPORTERS EITHER. ONE OF THEM, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KINGST 04074 221739Z

INTELLIGENT WOMAN WHO IS ONE OF HIS STAUNCHEST BACKERS, PUT IT THIS WAY: 'WHEN I HEAR HIM TALK TO A CROWD SOMETIMES I FIND MYSELF GETTING FRIGHTENED -- THEN I REMEMBER WHO IT IS TALKING. I TELL MYSELF: 'THIS IS MICHAEL, IT'S ALRIGHT'. THAT'S WHAT I TELL MYSELF TOO. BUT, LORD, I WISH IT WASN'T SO NECESSARY TO REPEAT IT.'" END TEXT.
GERARD

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